

BIOGRAPHY



R. Nicholas Burns

Under Secretary, Political Affairs

Term of Appointment: 03/17/2005 to present

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns is the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, the Department of State's third ranking official. Appointed by President Bush, he was confirmed by the U.S. Senate on March 17, 2005 and was sworn into office by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. As Under Secretary, he oversees U.S. policy in each region of the world and serves in the senior career Foreign Service position at the Department.

Prior to his current assignment, Ambassador Burns was the United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As Ambassador to NATO, he headed the combined State-Defense Department U.S. Mission to NATO at a time when the Alliance committed to new missions in Iraq, Afghanistan and the global war against terrorism, and accepted seven new members.

From 1997 to 2001, Ambassador Burns was U.S. Ambassador to Greece. During his tenure as Ambassador, the U.S. expanded its military and law enforcement cooperation with Greece, strengthened our partnership in the Balkans, increased trade and investment and people-to-people programs.

From 1995 to 1997, Ambassador Burns was Spokesman of the Department of State and Acting Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs for Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Secretary Madeleine Albright. In this position, he gave daily press conferences on U.S. foreign policy issues, accompanied both Secretaries of State on all their foreign trips and coordinated all of the Department's public outreach programs.

Mr. Burns, a career Senior Foreign Service Officer, served for five years (1990-1995) on the National Security Council staff at the White House. He was Special Assistant to President Clinton and Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasia Affairs. He had lead responsibility in the White House for advising the President on all aspects of U.S. relations with the fifteen countries of the former Soviet Union.

Under President George H.W. Bush, he was Director for Soviet (and then Russian) Affairs. During this time, he attended all U.S. – Soviet summits and numerous other international meetings and specialized on economic assistance issues, U.S. ties with Russia and Ukraine, and

relations with the Baltic countries. He was a member of the Department's Transition Team in 1988, and served as Staff Officer in the Department's Operations Center and Secretariat in 1987-1988.

Mr. Burns began his Foreign Service career in Africa and the Middle East. He was an intern at the U.S. Embassy in Nouakchott, Mauritania, Vice Consul and Staff Assistant to the Ambassador in Cairo, Egypt between 1983-1985, and then Political Officer at the American Consulate General in Jerusalem from 1985 to 1987. In this position, he coordinated U.S. economic assistance to the Palestinian population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Mr. Burns has been awarded the State Department's Superior Honor Award for outstanding performance three times, the Department's James Clement Dunn Award for Excellence in 1994, and in 2000 the Charles E. Cobb Award for Trade Development by an Ambassador. He has been decorated by the governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for his work in securing withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltic region in the 1990s and for helping to secure their admittance to NATO.

Mr. Burns was born on January 28, 1956. Raised in Massachusetts, he earned the Certificat Pratique de Langue Francaise from the University of Paris (Sorbonne) in 1977. He subsequently earned a B.A. in European History from Boston College in 1978, graduated Summa Cum Laude and was elected Phi Beta Kappa. He then received an Masters degree with distinction from John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in 1980 in International Economics and American Foreign Policy. He has received honorary doctorates from eight American universities. In 2001, he was given the Public Service Award by the Boston College Alumni Association. In 2002, he was presented the Woodrow Wilson Award for Distinguished Government Service by the Johns Hopkins University. He was named Communicator of the Year by the National Association of Government Communicators in 1997.

Before entering the Foreign Service, Mr. Burns worked as Program Officer at A.T. International, a non-profit organization specializing in economic assistance for Third World Countries.

Mr. Burns is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the Order of St. John and a life-long member of Red Sox nation. He speaks French, Arabic, and Greek. He and his wife Elizabeth Baylies have three daughters.

Released on March 17, 2005

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/biog/6198.htm>